

7 Signs, Pavement Markings, and Signals

Signs, pavement markings, and signals are all ways of communicating. They provide information about regulations, highway routes, directions, places of interest, and cautions. They include regulatory, warning, and guide signs. This section presents important information about signs, pavement markings, and signals. Obeying signs, traffic signals, and markings will help to keep you safe.

Signs

Regulatory Signs

Regulatory signs that control moving traffic are always red and white or black and white. “Do Not Enter,” “Wrong Way,” “Yield,” and “Stop” are examples of signs with red backgrounds. Regulatory signs that control parking may be green and white.

The yield sign indicates a driver must slow down and give way to all traffic and pedestrians.



The shape of this sign indicates stop. Stop and give the right-of-way to pedestrians and all cross traffic before moving forward. You must stop behind a marked or unmarked crosswalk that joins sidewalks on opposite sides of the street, or behind a marked stop line. If there is

no pavement marking or crosswalk, stop before entering the intersection, where traffic coming from all directions is visible.



A red circle with a line through it always means “no,” such as “no entry.”

This sign means do not turn around in the middle of a street or an intersection.



These two signs are sometimes used together and mean do not pass. The yellow pennant sign will be posted on the left side of the road. The white sign will be posted on the right side.

This sign follows the do not pass sign. It is on the right side of the road. It marks the end of a no-passing zone. You may then pass when it is safe to do so.



This sign means traffic in the right lane must turn right. Traffic in the second lane should either continue driving straight or turn right. A similar sign may be used for left-turning traffic.

This sign means no right turn. The arrow pointed to the left means no left turn.



This sign informs or warns not to drive across the median (divider strip) or emergency crossover of a freeway. It is against the law for anyone to cross a freeway median—except for

law enforcement, emergency, or maintenance vehicles. To change directions on a freeway, drive to the next exit, get off, and re-enter the freeway in the other direction.



This sign directs traffic to the right of an obstruction.

This sign is posted over a highway lane that is used only for making a left turn. Traffic from both directions will be using this lane. Never use a turning lane as a merge lane to pull out into traffic or to overtake and pass other vehicles.



Located at intersections, this sign means do not turn until the light turns green.

This type of sign shows the fastest and slowest speeds allowed on a freeway, weather permitting. On most roads, only the fastest speed allowed is shown.



Warning Signs

Signs like this provide advisory speeds at freeway exit and entrance ramps. They show the maximum recommended safe speed to drive on a ramp in ideal weather conditions.

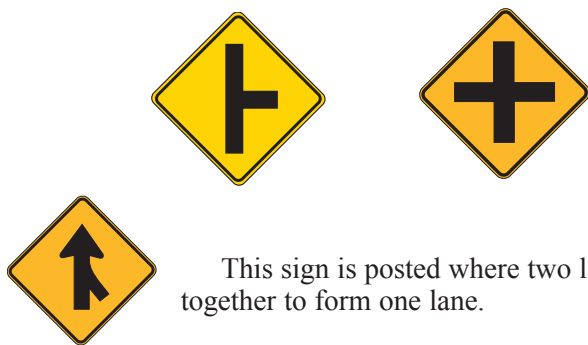


These signs warn of a curve or sharp turn ahead. If the curve is too sharp to drive at the posted speed limit, an advisory speed sign is attached to indicate the fastest recommended speed in ideal weather conditions. Slow down before entering the curve



If the speed limit is not posted before a curve, judge how sharp the curve is and change speed accordingly. If you cannot see around a curve, slow down more than normal. When driving around a curve, the vehicle will tend to move to the outside of the curve.

These signs show an upcoming side or cross road. Look for other vehicles entering or leaving the highway.



This sign is posted where two lanes come together to form one lane.

These signs mean a lane ends ahead, and a driver must merge into the proper lane. However, yield the right-of-way to vehicles already in the left lane, or in the right lane in the case of a “lane ends merge right” sign.





This sign shows the road ahead has two-way traffic.

This sign warns of a steep hill. You may need to slow down at the top or change to a lower gear.



This sign cautions that a section of the roadway may be more slippery when weather conditions are bad. Make sure to slow down when the road is wet or icy.

This sign marks a traffic island or obstruction. Drive to either side.



This sign is used to remind drivers that they are going from a divided highway to a two-way roadway.

This sign informs or warns you that a bridge or underpass is ahead with a clearance of only 12 feet, 6 inches. Know the height of the vehicle and load.



This sign means no trucks allowed.

This sign means prepare to stop ahead.



Slow-Moving Vehicles

This sign on the back of a slow-moving vehicle is a warning to slow down. It means the vehicle cannot travel faster than 25 mph. Do not get impatient if behind one of these vehicles. The driver will usually try to pull over to the side whenever possible to prevent traffic back-ups.



Guide Signs

Guide signs, including those for motorist services, parks, and public recreation areas, tell what is available ahead. Some show distance, destination, and direction.



Route Markers

Route markers identify highways by number and symbol as part of national, state, or local systems.

Limited-access interstate freeway sign



U.S. highway sign



State highway sign



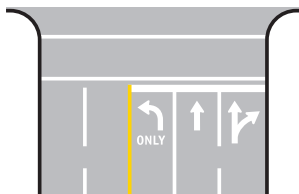
County route marker



Pavement Markings

Pavement markings are white or yellow and, like highway signs, warn, regulate, and inform drivers.

White lines separate traffic lanes moving in the same direction. They include:



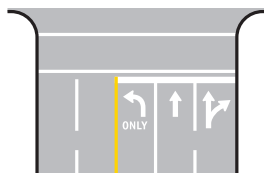
- **Broken white lines:** On roadways that have more than one lane moving in one direction, broken white lines separate traffic lanes. Drive between these lines. Never straddle them.
- **Solid white lines:** Solid white lines mark the right edge of the road. Often called fog lines, solid white lines help you stay on the road at night or in bad weather. Passing to the right of another vehicle by crossing a solid white line that marks the right edge of the roadway is prohibited, even if the shoulder is paved.

Solid white lines are also used to separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction. When solid white lines separate lanes of traffic moving in the same direction, crossing a solid white line is not recommended. These white lines may designate sharp curves, freeway acceleration and deceleration lanes, and other parts of the road where lane changes are considered dangerous.

A double solid white line is used to show a travel path where driving in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line, but crossing the line is prohibited.

These lines are used to separate traffic for safety reasons such as bicycle ways, pedestrian ways, or where one lane of traffic is usually traveling at a higher speed than the other lane:

- **Crosswalk lines:** Solid white lines mark many pedestrian crosswalks. When these lines are used, they go all the way across the pavement. Notice them at intersections and, sometimes, between intersections. Stop the vehicle behind the crosswalk line.
- **Stop lines:** Wide white lines painted across a traffic lane mark where you must stop the vehicle at intersections. This keeps the vehicle out of the way of pedestrians and cross traffic. If there are no stop lines or crosswalks, stop the vehicle before entering the intersection. You should be able to see traffic from all directions.
- **Directional Arrows:** Wide, white arrows painted down the center of the traffic lane indicate the direction that the vehicle must travel. In the graphic provided, the arrow pointing to the left indicates that all vehicles in this lane must turn left. The next lane may only go straight. The right lane may go straight or turn right. Always check for traffic and pedestrians before completing your turn.



Yellow lines separate vehicle traffic lanes moving in opposite directions. They include:

- **Broken yellow lines:** A single broken yellow line usually marks the centerline of a two-way roadway where a vehicle may pass if it is safe.
- **Solid yellow lines:** If a solid yellow line is on your side of the centerline of a roadway, do not cross over it to pass. On a four-lane divided roadway or a one-way road, a solid yellow line usually marks the left edge of the pavement. A double solid yellow line down the middle of a two-lane roadway means that passing is not allowed for vehicles traveling in either direction.

- **Center lane, left-turn-only:** Many roads have a left-turn only lane to help traffic flow more smoothly. Each outside edge of this lane is marked with a solid yellow line with broken yellow lines on the inside edges. Left turns must be made from within this lane, and may be made from either direction. Using this lane to pass other vehicles or as a merge lane is both dangerous and illegal.

Signals

Traffic signals control traffic at intersections. It is illegal to drive across public or private property, such as a store parking lot, to avoid a traffic-control device. Combinations of traffic signals, signs, pavement markings, and other traffic-control devices may be used at railroad crossings, schools, street and highway construction, and maintenance operations. Pedestrian signals control pedestrian traffic. Always give the right-of-way to pedestrians.

Traffic Control Signals



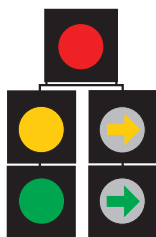
A red light means stop. It is at the top of a traffic signal in Michigan. Stop the vehicle behind a crosswalk or stop line. A yellow light means the green signal has ended and the signal is about to turn red. You are required to stop on a yellow light. If you cannot stop safely, do not speed up but drive cautiously through the intersection. A green light means proceed cautiously after checking for pedestrians and vehicles. If a traffic light is not working at an intersection, and there are no law enforcement officers or

temporary traffic control devices present, you should follow basic right-of-way rules. These include yielding to vehicles that reach the intersection before you, to those on your right if you reach the intersection at the same time, and when turning left, giving right-of-way to oncoming traffic.



(Left Turn)

The 5-section head signal, or “doghouse signal,” is used to regulate left and right turns at intersections. This type of signal has a red light on top, a green and yellow turn arrow, and a green and yellow light. When the green arrow is lit, turning drivers have a “protected turn,”



(Right Turn)

meaning all oncoming or conflicting traffic is stopped. When the green light is lit, turning drivers may complete their turn when oncoming traffic has cleared.



A flashing red light means come to a full stop. Proceed when the road is clear.

A flashing yellow light means proceed carefully through the intersection. Scan across traffic in both directions.

A steady green arrow means you may proceed with caution in the direction of the arrow if the way is clear. Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in the intersection. Traffic coming toward you should stop.

Railroad Crossings

Traffic control systems for railroad crossings include all signs, signals, markings, and illuminated devices that permit safe and efficient movement of both rail and highway traffic. Trains cannot stop at railroad crossings. It is much harder and takes much longer for a train to stop, up to a mile in most cases. It could be fatal to ignore a signal or try to cross in front of a train.

When approaching a railroad crossing that does not have a signal or a gate, slow down and look both ways. This is good advice even if a signaled crossing does not indicate a train is coming.

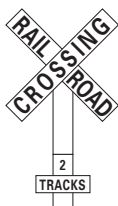


This sign warns of a railroad crossing ahead. If a train is coming, all vehicles must stop no more than 50 feet or less than 15 feet from the tracks.

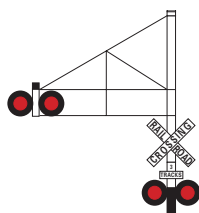
If there is more than one set of tracks, check carefully for other trains that may be coming. Do not cross the tracks until all trains have passed. When the road is snow covered, proceed over tracks with enough speed so you will not get stuck. Avoid changing gears while crossing the tracks.

When you see devices that warn of railroad crossings and possible oncoming trains:

- Slow down and be ready to stop.
- School buses, vehicles carrying passengers for hire, gasoline trucks, and other vehicles carrying hazardous materials must stop and make sure no train is coming, even if there is no stop sign or railroad crossing signal.
- If there is a stop sign at the crossing, you must stop whether or not a train is coming.
- Be careful not to get “trapped” on railroad tracks by a line of vehicles backed up by a traffic signal.

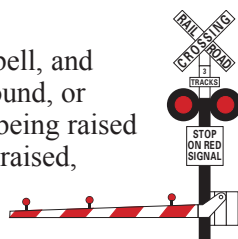


This railroad sign means slow down. Do not cross the track(s) without checking in both directions for a train. Be sure tracks are clear for a safe distance. If there are two or more tracks, the number will be indicated.



This railroad-crossing signal has a bell and flashing red lights to warn that a train is coming. Stop when the bell is ringing and the lights are flashing. Once the train has passed, do not proceed until the lights and bell have stopped and you are sure that all tracks are clear.

This railroad crossing has a sign, signal, bell, and gate to stop traffic. Do not drive through, around, or under any crossing gate while it is down, or being raised or lowered. Stop and wait until the gates are raised, signals stop flashing, and bells stop ringing.



School Areas

This sign means that school children may be crossing. Slow down and watch for them. Traffic controls near school areas may include school crosswalk lines, stop lines, curb markings, word and symbol markings, special school speed limits, and school crosswalk signs.



Watch for adult crossing guards and student safety patrols helping children cross streets safely.

Vehicles must stop for crossing guards with a stop sign upraised, and may not continue until the crossing guard has moved completely out of the intersection.

Construction and Maintenance

Warning signs in construction, maintenance, or other designated work areas are diamond-shaped with black lettering on an orange or yellow background.

A combination of signs, signals, lighting devices, markings, barricades, routing, and hand-signaling devices may be used around road construction, maintenance, and surveying operations and utility work.

Construction and maintenance signs may mean part of a lane, an entire lane, or the whole road is blocked.



These signs are also used when work is being done adjacent to the roadway, on shoulders, or in ditch areas.

Construction zones can be for a short period of time or last one or more construction seasons. Drivers are made aware of such zones by advanced signage regarding traffic shifts due to lane or roadway closures.

Be aware of the warning sign messages and obey them as directed. Do not wait until the last possible moment to merge into a lane of traffic. Forced merges are as discourteous as they are dangerous. Watch and drive defensively to avoid problems. Be patient and everyone will travel through the construction zones safely. Watch carefully for construction workers or moving equipment.

When going through a designated work area where a full traffic lane or part of a traffic lane is closed for construction, maintenance, or surveying activities, the speed limit is 45 mph unless posted differently. **Fines are doubled for all moving violations in work zones.**

In addition, motorists caught speeding in construction zones face increased points on their driving records. Under the law, motorists will be assessed:

- 3 points for speeding 10 mph or less over the posted limit.
- 4 points for speeding more than 10 mph but not more than 15 mph over the limit.
- 5 points for speeding more than 15 mph over the limit.

Motorists who have accumulated 12 or more points in a two-year period will be required to undergo a driver assessment reexamination.

Motorists causing injury or death to roadside construction workers or operators of farm equipment are subject to fines of up to \$7,500 and imprisonment of up to 15 years.

Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian signals are used to control pedestrian traffic with the words “WALK” and “DONT WALK,” or the green or white symbol of a walking person, that means to walk, and a red upraised hand, that means do not walk. To assist blind and visually impaired pedestrians, crosswalks may include an audible “countdown” or message indicating how much time is left before the signal changes.



Single Section with Cut-out Letters



Two Section Types

A pedestrian should not start to cross when the “DONT WALK” is flashing, but if already partway across should complete crossing. Drivers should be cautious when pedestrians are present, especially when turning. Traffic islands help separate moving traffic or guide traffic and also provide safety for pedestrians.